What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus for use in a telephony system, comprising:

a digital interface for communicating with a stimulus device;

a packet interface for communicating with a packet-based network; and

a controller to receive stimulus control information from the digital interface and to encapsulate the stimulus control information into one or more packets for transmission over the packet-based network through the packet interface.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller encapsulates the stimulus control information into an Internet Protocol packet.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digital interface includes a UART interface.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digital interface includes a time compression multiplex interface.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller adds a destination address of a telephone switch system into the one or more packets.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller adds a destination address of a stimulus telephone into the one or more packets.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information is according to a first stimulus language, and wherein the stimulus control information remains in the first stimulus language after encapsulation.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller encapsulates the stimulus control information without translating the stimulus control information into a different form.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the controller encapsulates the stimulus control information by adding header information according to a network protocol.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the network protocol header information includes an Internet Protocol header.

11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the controller adds further header information according to a transport protocol.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the further header information includes a User Datagram Protocol header.

13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller also scrambles the stimulus message before encapsulation.

14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller encrypts the one or more packets.

15. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a receiver to receive the one or more packets, the receiver including an element to decapsulate the one or more packets to extract the stimulus control information.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the receiver is associated with a second stimulus device, and wherein the extracted stimulus control information is in a native stimulus language of the second stimulus device.

17. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information includes at least one of hook state information, display information, and key press event information.

18. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information includes a command selected from the group consisting of a handset volume control

command, a handset connect/disconnect command, an audio stream open/close command, and a ringer activation command.

19. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller receives one or more packets containing a stimulus message from the packet interface, the controller further decapsulating the one or more packets to obtain the stimulus message for transmission to the digital interface.

20. A method for use in a telephony system, comprising:

communicating stimulus control information with a stimulus device through a first interface and packet information with a packet-based network through a packet interface;

encapsulating stimulus control information received from the first interface; and

transmitting the encapsulated stimulus control information as at least one packet to the packet interface.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:

decapsulating one or more packets received from the packet interface and containing stimulus control information; and

transmitting the stimulus control information to the first interface.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the stimulus control information is in a native stimulus language, and wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information includes inserting the stimulus control information in its native stimulus language into a payload of the at least one packet.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information includes adding a network protocol header to the stimulus control information.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information includes adding an Internet Protocol header.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information further includes adding a User Datagram Protocol header.

26. The method of claim 20, further comprising scrambling the stimulus control information before encapsulating.

27. The method of claim 20, further comprising encrypting the at least one packet.

28. An article including one or more machine-readable storage media containing instructions for call control in a telephony system, the instructions when executed causing a device to:

receive data according to a stimulus protocol from a first interface;

encapsulate the data into one or more packets; and

communicate the one or more packets to a packet-based data network.

29. The article of claim 28, wherein the one or more storage media contain instructions that when executed causes the device to:

receive a packet containing data according to the stimulus protocol;

decapsulate the packet; and

communicate the data according to the stimulus protocol to the first interface.

30. A data signal embodied in a carrier wave and containing instructions for call control in a telephony system, the instructions when executed causing a device to:

receive at least one packet containing a stimulus message according to a first language;

decapsulate the at least one packet to extract the stimulus message according to the first language; and

send the stimulus message according to the first language to a stimulus device.

31. The data signal of claim 30, further containing instructions that when executed causes a device to:

receive a stimulus message according to the first language from the stimulus device; and

encapsulate the stimulus message according to a first language into at least one packet.

32. A data signal embodied in a carrier wave for communication over a packet-based network having one or more network elements, the data signal capable of being processed by at least one network element, the data signal comprising:

header information according to a network protocol; and

a payload portion carrying a stimulus message according to a native stimulus language of a stimulus device associated with the at least one network element.

33. The data signal of claim 32, wherein the header information includes an Internet Protocol header.

34. An apparatus for use in a telephony system, comprising:

means for receiving a stimulus message from a stimulus device;

means for encapsulating the stimulus message into at least one packet; and

means for transmitting the at least one packet to a packet-based network.